

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-14 EUR-12 EA-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 ACDA-12
INR-10 IO-14 L-03 EB-08 NRC-07 SOE-02 DOE-15
SS-15 SP-02 CEQ-01 PM-05 DOEE-00 /140 W
-----101089 231114Z /10

O R 231032Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4489
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY VIENNA

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USIAEA

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ENRG, TECH, UK
SUBJECT: PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON WINDSCALE

REF: (A) LONDON 3894; (B) LONDON 4004

1. MARCH 22 PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON JUSTICE PARKER'
REPORT ON THE PROPOSED EXPANSION OF NUCLEAR FUEL RE-
PROCESSING FACILITIES AT WINDSCALE ENDED WITH A 186-56
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VOTE EFFECTIVELY AGREEING THAT GOVERNMENT SHOULD ALLOW
CONSTRUCTION. AS ANTICIPATED, THE DEBATE TENDED TO
FAVOR APPROVAL OF THE EXPANSION WITHOUT AWAITING THE
COMPLETION OF INFCE. CONSERVATIVES TENDED TO SUPPORT
THE EXPANSION AND "SHADOW" ENERGY SECRETARY KING
ENDORSED THE PROJECT EXPLICITLY. WHILE LABOR PARLIA-
MENTARIANS VOICED MOST OF THE OPPOSITION, MORE THAN

HALF OF THOSE PARTICIPATING IN THE DEBATE BOTH FAVORED THE PROJECT AND OPPOSED DELAYING APPROVAL. WHILE DEBATE RANGED WIDELY AND TOUCHED ON MOST OF THE SAFETY, ENVIRONMENTAL, ECONOMIC, AND NON-PROLIFERATION CONSIDERATIONS VOICED IN THE WINDSCALE REPORT, THE PRINCIPAL OBJECTION GIVEN IN THE FLOOR DEBATE TO POSTPONING THE DECISION WAS THAT FRANCE MIGHT OBTAIN THE JAPANESE REPROCESSING CONTRACT.

2. FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN GAVE THE WIND-UP SPEECH ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT AND ENDORSED EARLY APPROVAL WITHOUT AWAITING THE OUTCOME OF INFCE. OWEN TOLD PARLIAMENT THE AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION HAD REQUESTED

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INR-10 IO-14 L-03 EB-08 NRC-07 SOE-02 DOE-15
SS-15 SP-02 CEQ-01 PM-05 DOEE-00 /140 W
-----101183 231113Z /10

O R 231032Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4490
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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THAT THE DECISION BE DELAYED UNTIL AFTER INFCE. HE SAID HMG FELT A DELAY MIGHT CONTRIBUTE TO THE DANGERS OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROLIFERATION BY ENCOURAGING LESS RESPONSIBLE COUNTRIES TO BEGIN REPROCESSING PROJECTS OF THEIR OWN DURING THE REMAINING 1-1/2 YEARS OF INFCE. HE SAID HMG WOULD ATTEMPT TO CONVINCE THE U.S. DURING INFCE THAT REPROCESSING EXPANSION IN RESPONSIBLE COUNTRIES WAS THE SUREST MEANS OF LIMITING PROLIFERATION. OWEN STATED HE BELIEVED "THERE IS A PROBABILITY THAT AS THIS UNCLASSIFIED

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DEBATE CONTINUES THERE WILL BE A GROWING TOGETHER AND A CONVERGENCE OF VIEW (BETWEEN THE US AND UK) ON THIS ISSUE." HE ADDED THAT HMG SHARED OUR VIEWS ON THE OVERALL IMPORTANCE OF NON-PROLIFERATION EFFORTS.

3. OWEN SAID THERE WAS A FRANK DIFFERENCE OF OPINION WITH THE US ON THE WINDSCALE PROJECT TIMING BUT REMINDED PARLIAMENT THAT HE WAS WELL KNOWN AS ONE WHO FAVORED MANY U.S. POLICIES. OWEN HINTED THAT THERE WAS LITTLE PROSPECT THAT INFCE WOULD PRODUCE ANYTHING STARTLING OR NEW IN REPROCESSING. HE SAID MANY COUNTRIES HAD AGREED TO PARTICIPATE IN INFCE ON THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE EXERCISE WOULD NOT LIMIT THEIR POLICY DECISIONS. NEVERTHELESS, HE NOTED THAT STORAGE POND CONSTRUCTION WOULD OCCUPY MUCH OF THE EARLY BUILDING ACTIVITY AT WINDSCALE. SINCE ACTUAL POURING OF CONCRETE FOR THE RE-PROCESSING PLANT ITSELF WOULD NOT BEGIN BEFORE 1981 OR 1982, THE DESIGN COULD STILL BE ADJUSTED TO ACCOMMODATE ANY RESULTS OF INFCE.

4. COMMENT. THE HOUSE STILL HAS TO VOTE ON THE SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT ORDER WHICH HAS TO BE APPROVED BEFORE PLANS FOR THE PLANT CAN PROCEED. THE ORDER WILL BE LAID BEFORE THE HOUSE AFTER EASTER. IN VIEW OF THE TONE OF THE DEBATE AND THE RESULT OF THE VOTE, APPROVAL SEEMS VIRTUALLY CERTAIN.

STREATOR

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DEBATES, NUCLEAR ENERGY, CENTRAL LEGISLATURE, NUCLEAR FUELS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LONDON04696
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780128-0097
Format: TEL
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780333/aaaabbhy.tel
Line Count: 160
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 9b341fbf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION OES
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 LONDON 3894, 78 LONDON 4004
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3227400
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON WINDSCALE
TAGS: ENRG, TECH, UK
To: STATE USIAEA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/9b341fbf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014